The Cleveland Museum of Art

Van Gogh Repetitions opens on March 2, 2014

News Release
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First Cleveland exhibition in over 50 years devoted to Van Gogh looks beneath the surface of some of his best-known works Members preview and opening lecture on February 28, 2014

CLEVELAND (February 21, 2014) – The Cleveland Museum of Art presents a ground-breaking exhibition exploring Van Gogh's *répétitions*—the term the artist used to describe his practice of creating additional versions or variations of his own compositions. As the first exhibition to focus specifically on this crucial aspect of the artist's creative practice, *Van Gogh Repetitions* seeks to make a valuable contribution to Van Gogh scholarship while giving audiences a deeper understanding of his working methods. The exhibition brings together more than 30 paintings and works on paper from some of the world's most renowned collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Metropolitan Museum, New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo; the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam; and the Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Among the featured works are two versions of *The Arlésienne* (1888) and five versions of *The Postman Joseph Roulin* (1888-1889). *Van Gogh Repetitions* will be on view at the Cleveland Museum of Art March 2 to May 26, 2014.

Van Gogh Repetitions was initially inspired by the study of the close relationship between the Cleveland Museum of Art's *Large Plane Trees* and The Phillips Collection's *The Road Menders*, both dating from late 1889. The exhibition reunites the two masterpieces to invite deep, focused study of the similarities and differences between the first version, an *étude d'après nature* (study from nature), and the repetition. Two teams of curators and conservators subsequently conducted comparable analytical studies on repetitions in museums on both sides of the Atlantic.

"Our research reveals that Van Gogh was a far more complex and nuanced artist than the popular stereotype suggests," observes William Robinson, curator of Modern European Art at the Cleveland Museum of Art. "By comparing works painted from life with the repetitions produced in the studio, the exhibition challenges the popular caricature of Van Gogh as an artist who always painted in a flurry of overheated emotion. Extensive technical analysis of the artist's paintings, combined with a thorough reading of his letters, offers new insights into an artist who has been widely misportrayed in books, plays and films."

Currently, there is considerable debate even among experts over how Van Gogh produced his repetitions. What has become clear is that Van Gogh's practice of making repetitions was more extensive and vital to his creative process than is commonly recognized. He made these works from his early years in the Netherlands to his final months at Auvers-sur-Oise. While occasionally making them for practical reasons, such as producing additional versions to give to friends and fellow artists, he often exploited the opportunity to develop an idea or motif more fully. Over time, Van Gogh came to regard this activity as a creative endeavor in which the artist may adjust, refine or intensify a composition's visual and emotional impact—a process comparable to a musician inflecting a score with personal interpretations, producing an original work of art with each new performance.

The exhibition is accompanied by a richly illustrated, scholarly catalogue, published by Yale University Press in association with the Cleveland Museum of Art and The Phillips Collection. The catalogue features 125 color illustrations, including numerous examples of Van Gogh's repetitions, related works and technical studies. Essays by CMA Curator William Robinson, CMA Senior Paintings Conservator Marcia Steele, Phillips Chief Curator Eliza Rathbone, Phillips Head of Conservation Elizabeth Steele, H. Travers Newton, independent conservator and Galina K. Omsted, CMA research assistant consider the many unresolved issues and controversies surrounding Van Gogh's repetitions. The Cleveland Museum of Art is publishing a supplement to the catalogue, *Van Gogh: New Research and Perspectives,* on its website.

Tickets

Adult combination tickets for *Van Gogh Repetitions* and *Remaking Tradition: Modern Art of Japan from the Tokyo National Museum* are $20 and include re-entry to view the *Remaking Tradition* second rotation of objects. The exhibitions are free for museum members. Combination tickets must be purchased by phone at 216-421-7350 or in person; no online ticketing is available for this exhibition. Complementary exhibition programming includes lectures, tours, film and educational programs.

CMA Members Preview

The exhibition is open to CMA Members from 4 – 9:00 p.m. on Friday, February 28, and from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 1. Timed tickets are required for entry.

Related Programming

Van Gogh Repetitions is accompanied by related programming. For more information and updates, please refer to www.clevelandart.org.

Lectures and Gallery Talks:
Van Gogh: The Face in the Mirror
Friday, February 28, 7:00 p.m., Gartner Auditorium.
Free; reservations strongly recommended. Please remember that timed tickets are required for entry to the exhibition.

George Shackelford, deputy director of the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, will speak on Van Gogh's remarkable self-portraits, from the earliest drawings made about 1881 to the last disturbing paintings of 1889. Drawing on the artist's writings, Shackelford will chronicle Vincent's search to fix his own image in the context of his biography, and will relate the artist's remarkable paintings and drawings to

the history of self-portraiture from Rembrandt to Lucian Freud. Shackelford is co-author of *Van Gogh: Face to Face* (2000), *Gauguin Tahiti* (2003) and *Degas and the Nude* (2011). Prior to his appointment at the Kimbell, Shackelford also served as Chairman of European Art and Curator of Modern Art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts until 2011, where he curated the exhibition *Van Gogh: Face to Face*, focused on Van Gogh's evolving approach to the portrait throughout his tragically brief life.

This lecture has been generously sponsored by the Painting and Drawing Society in conjunction with the exhibition *Van Gogh Repetitions*.

Faking Van Gogh
Wednesday, April 2, 7:00 p.m., Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation Gallery
Free; timed exhibition ticket required. Advance registration recommended.
Curatorial Research Assistant Lucy Zimmerman discusses the history of Van Gogh forgeries and their complicated relationship to the artist's repetitions, from the faked Van Goghs of Otto Wacker of the early 1900s, to suspicions about certain canvases raised by experts today.

Van Gogh Week
In celebration of *Van Gogh Repetitions*, enjoy a lecture and symposium delving into the life and work of this legendary artist.

Van Gogh and Madness: The Artist Versus the Legend
Wednesday, April 23, 7:00 p.m., Gartner Auditorium
Free; reservations strongly recommended. Please remember that timed tickets are required for entry to the exhibition.

CMA Curator of Modern European Art William Robinson and CMA Senior Paintings Conservator Marcia Steele discuss the research conducted in preparation for the exhibition *Van Gogh Repetitions* and its potential for altering perceptions of this iconic artist. Recent discoveries obtained through scientific analysis of Van Gogh's paintings shed new light on the artist's working methods, stimulating reconsideration of the relationship between his artistic production and illness. The speakers explore the questions of what these studies tell us about conventional views of Van Gogh and the constructed myth of the modern artist.

Presented by the Cleveland Museum of Art Women's Council.

Symposium - *Rediscovering Van Gogh*
Saturday, April 26, 12:30 p.m., Gartner Auditorium
Free; reservations strongly recommended. Please remember that timed tickets are required for entry to the exhibition.

Art historians and medical professionals offer new interpretations and insights into Van Gogh's art and illness. Speakers include William Robinson, co-curator of the exhibition *Van Gogh Repetitions*; Cornelia Homburg, internationally renowned Van Gogh scholar and curator of three Van Gogh exhibitions; and Dr. Joseph Calabrese, chair and professor of Psychiatry, Case Western Reserve

University School of Medicine, and director of the Bipolar Research Center, Mood Disorders Program, University Hospitals, Cleveland.

Tours:

***Van Gogh Repetitions* Guided Tours**

Weekdays, March 4–May 16, 11:00 AM.

Depart from the information desk in the Ames Family Atrium. Exhibition ticket required.

Film:

Vincent and Theo X3

In conjunction with the current exhibition Van Gogh Repetitions, we present three acclaimed films with differing perspectives on the relationship between Vincent van Gogh and his art dealer brother Theo.

Vincent & Theo

Sunday, April 6, 1:30 p.m.; Wednesday, April 9, 6:30 p.m.

This naturalistic look at the lives of Vincent and Theo van Gogh shows that both men were tormented individuals. The movie also examines the age-old tension between art and commerce. Directed by Robert Altman. With Tim Roth and Paul Rhys. (Netherlands/UK/France/Italy/Germany, 1990, 138 min.)

Lust for Life

Sunday, April 13, 1:30 p.m.; Wednesday, April 16, 6:30 p.m.

Van Gogh's anguished personal and artistic life, and his brother's attempts to help him, are vividly dramatized in this celebrated biopic that employs the painter's vibrant colors. Directed by Vincente Minnelli. With Kirk Douglas, James Donald, and Anthony Quinn. As Paul Gauguin, Quinn won an Oscar. (USA, 1956, 122 min.)

Vincent: The Life and Death of Vincent van Gogh

Sunday, April 27, 1:30 p.m.; Wednesday, April 30, 7:00 p.m.

A nuanced, multifaceted portrait of "mad" Vincent van Gogh emerges from this singular film, in which excerpts from Vincent's many letters to his brother (read here by John Hurt) are paired with finished canvases and with shots of landscapes that the artist might have painted. "The best film about a painter I have ever seen." –Roger Ebert. Directed by Paul Cox. (Australia/Belgium, 1987, 99 min.)

Unless noted, all films will be shown in the museum's Morley Lecture Hall located at 11150 East Boulevard in University Circle and admission prices are $9 for the general public; $7 for museum members, seniors 65 and older, and students; or one museum film series voucher. Vouchers are sold in books of 10 and cost $70 for the general public, $60 for museum members.

Family Day:

Second Sunday: Go, Go, Van Gogh!

Sunday, March 9, 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Ames Family Atrium.

Free.

Bring your family to the Cleveland Museum of Art on the second Sunday of every month for a variety of activities including art-making, storytelling, scavenger hunts, and movement-based gallery talks—no

two Sundays are the same! Second Sundays features a unique theme each month in conjunction with the museum's collection, exhibitions, and events.
In March, celebrate the art of Vincent van Gogh and his interest in Japanese art. Paint like van Gogh, work with other museum visitors to create a Japanese Screen, and help make a work of art in motion in the atrium. In honor of *Van Gogh Repetitions*, take our Double Vision scavenger hunt through the galleries and try to spot the differences.

Van Gogh Repetitions is organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art and The Phillips Collection in Washington, DC. The presentation at the Cleveland Museum of Art is proudly sponsored by BakerHostetler. The exhibition is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities, and it features exceptional loans from the Musée d'Orsay.

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About the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes more than 63,000 artworks and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and performing arts and is a leader in digital innovations. One of the top comprehensive art museums in the nation, recognized for its award-winning Open Access program and free of charge to all, the Cleveland Museum of Art is located in the University Circle neighborhood.

The museum is supported in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and made possible in part by the Ohio Arts Council (OAC), which receives support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts. The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically. For more information about the museum and its holdings, programs and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit cma.org [1].

Press Announcements [2]

Source URL: https://www.clevelandart.org/about/press/media-kit/van-gogh-repetitions-opens-march-2-2014

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[1] https://www.clevelandart.org

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